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ABSTRACT

This 90-item annotated bibliography contains material primarily published after 1977. The bibliography provides a readily available resource related to informal reading inventories (IRIs). The three sections of the document are: (1) basic information; (2) research; and (3) descriptive reports. The bibliography is designed to be useful to a diverse group of educators: teachers, researchers, and especially those involved in reading assessment or the preparation of prospective teachers. (RS)

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Research and Progress in Informal Reading Inventories

(An Annotated Bibliography)

Jerry L. Johns

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Research and Progress
in
Informal Reading Inventories

(An Annotated Bibliography)

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1990

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PREFACE

The intent of this annotated bibliography is to provide a readily available resource related to informal reading inventories (IRIs). The materials cited in this volume, for the most part, were published since 1977, the year the first lengthy annotated bibliography on IRIs was made available (Johns, Garton, Schoenfelder, and Skriba, 1977). The current bibliography should be fairly inclusive from about 1977, although it is not exhaustive. Some of the annotations were adapted from the original articles or ERIC documents.

Because the growth in IRIs has spanned nearly half a century, I also decided to include especially useful items written prior to 1977. In most cases, these items dealt with history or research areas.

This annotated bibliography is designed to be useful to a diverse group of educators: teachers, researchers, and especially those involved in reading assessment or the preparation of prospective teachers.

I want to express my appreciation to Karen Mack and Elaine Kohlin for assisting with the annotations. Margaret Jacob and Tanya MaKarrall deserve thanks for typing the manuscript and for making numerous revisions. Their patience (tolerance?) with my desire for accuracy and consistency deserves very special recognition.

JLJ

SECTION I: BASIC INFORMATION

ANNOTATED BIBLIOGRAPHY

Johns, Jerry L., Sharon Garton, Paula Schoenfelder, and Patricia Skriba (compilers). **Assessing Reading Behavior: Informal Reading Inventories.** Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1977.

Presents annotations of approximately one hundred publications relating to IRIs. The listing is fairly inclusive from 1970 through 1976. Selected publications written prior to 1970 were also included. Entries were placed in one of the following categories: (1) history and critique; (2) overview; (3) guidelines for construction and use; (4) descriptive and research reports; (5) comparisons with standardized tests; (6) psycholinguistic insights; and (7) related factors (motivation, stress). A listing of doctoral dissertations and master's theses is also included.

OVERVIEW

Johnson, Marjorie Seddon, Roy A. Kress, and John J. Pikulski. **Informal Reading Inventories** (2nd ed.). Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1987.

Presents a comprehensive description of the use of IRIs. This book is designed to provide teachers and reading specialists with practical strategies for forming diagnostic impressions that are useful for planning reading instruction. Respectively, chapters discuss (1) the purpose and nature of IRIs; (2) estimating reading levels from IRIs; (3) administering, recording, and scoring individual IRIs; (4) diagnostically interpreting the results of IRIs; (5) individual word recognition tests; (6) constructing informal reading inventories and word recognition tests; (7) group informal reading inventories; and (8) conclusions. It is argued that the best IRIs evaluate reading through procedures that are as close as possible to natural reading activities and that they attempt to achieve a close fit between assessment and instructional materials. Further, it is emphasized that teachers must have a sound understanding of both the reading process and the flexible, diagnostic uses of IRIs before using them either to determine a student's reading level or to

answer specific instructional questions. The appendix, which comprises almost half of the book, presents comprehensive reports and interpretations of the results of the administration of IRIs to three children. The discussion of these cases illustrates how numerical criteria and qualitative considerations are combined to estimate reading and listening levels.

Betts, Emmett Albert. **Foundations of Reading Instruction.** New York: American Book, 1957.

Deals with specific reading needs and includes very specific and detailed information on IRIs in Chapter 21. The IRI is discussed in terms of uses, basic assumptions, reading levels, inventory construction, general administration procedures, limitations, advantages, and use of group inventories. The chapter includes examples of separate checklists that can be used by experienced and inexperienced examiners to record observations made during IRI administrations. It includes a summary form used in the author's reading clinic.

HISTORY

Johns, Jerry L., and Mary K. Lunn. "The Origin and Development of the Informal Reading Inventory," in Jerry L. Johns, **Basic Reading Inventory** (4th ed.). Dubuque, Iowa: Kendall/Hunt Publishing Company, 1988, 70-80.

Traces the development of the IRI from the 1920s through the 1980s. The authors discuss the future of the IRI as a diagnostic tool and conclude that it is a valuable way to assess reading performance.

Walter, Richard B. "History and Development of the Informal Reading Inventory," 1974. Microfiche ED 098 539.

Presents the history of the IRI and the problems of validity, reliability, and the selection of performance criteria. Discusses the value of IRIs for determining the instructional level of students. The paper concludes with selected literature which supports the contention that most teachers cannot be successful in using the IRI without training in construction, administration, and interpretation of such an instrument.

Be'din, H.O. "Informal Reading Testing: Historical Review and Review of the Research," in William K. Durr (Ed.), **Reading Difficulties: Diagnosis, Correction, and Remediation.** Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1970, 67-84.

Presents a historical overview of the thinking, experience, and literature of the analysis of reading performance. The author reviews the years from 1900 to 1969 for specific contributions to the present development of the IRI. Reading authorities are cited along with their research and conclusions on criteria, sources of test materials, and evaluations of word perception errors. Included is a list of references that have had significant input into the IRI.

GENERAL CRITIQUES

Caldwell, JoAnne. "A New Look at the Old Informal Reading Inventory," **The Reading Teacher**, 39 (November, 1985), 168-173.

Indicates that the format and the use of the IRI need to be modified in order to address recent research findings of schema theory (prior knowledge), text analysis (narrative and expository), cohesion, and metacognition. The author urges that IRIs be controlled for the effect of prior knowledge and topic familiarity while assessing comprehension through recall or retellings.

McKenna, Michael C. "Informal Reading Inventories: A Review of the Issues," **The Reading Teacher**, 36 (March, 1983), 670-679.

Reviews the literature concerning IRIs and discusses a number of issues related to them: readability, question choice, passage dependency, scoring criteria, and allowable miscues. Guidelines for constructing and using IRIs are offered. Two specific problems are noted for IRIs at the secondary level: passage readability and scoring criteria.

Pikulski, John J., and Timothy Shanahan. "Informal Reading Inventories: A Critical Analysis," in John J. Pikulski and Timothy Shanahan (Eds.), **Approaches to the Informal Evaluation of Reading.** Newark, Delaware: International Reading Association, 1982, 94-116.

Updates a 1974 review by assessing progress in IRIs and considering new issues. This analysis considers reli-

ability (interrater, alternate form), validity, criteria for reading levels, the impact of miscue theory, and comprehension questions. A study comparing teacher-constructed and commercially-prepared IRIs with 33 students found the same instructional level 67% of the time. Eight conclusions are presented at the end of the review.

Pikulski, John. "A Critical Review: Informal Reading Inventories," **The Reading Teacher**, 28 (November, 1974), 141-151.

Discusses the early history of informal diagnostic procedures, points out the continued existence of several perplexing problems regarding the use of IRIs, and reviews problem areas with the idea of approaching some possible solutions. The IRI is discussed with regard to establishment of levels, evaluation of validity and reliability, use of quantitative or qualitative criteria, and question types which should be included. Admits that some imprecision and uncertainty exist with regard to informal procedures, but concludes that IRIs based upon instructional materials provide the closest possible match between teaching and testing. Suggests methodological questions concerning IRIs which deserve closer scrutiny by researchers.

GENERAL REVIEWS OF PUBLISHED INVENTORIES

Harris, Larry, A., and Jerome A. Niles. "An Analysis of Published Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading Horizons**, 22 (Spring, 1982), 159-174.

Offers advantages and disadvantages of commercial IRIs and analyzes 12 IRIs in four areas: (1) purposes; (2) format; (3) scoring procedures and criteria; and (4) instructions for interpretation and use. Results of the analysis are presented in eight tables. The authors conclude that considerable variation exists among IRIs.

Jongsma, Kathleen S., and Eugene A. Jongsma. "Test Review: Commercial Informal Reading Inventories," **The Reading Teacher**, 34, (March, 1981), 697-705.

Reviews 11 commercial IRIs in three major areas: (1) contents (features of the passages and questions); (2) procedures for administering and scoring; and (3) suggestions for interpreting results. A summary of results is presented in a lengthy, helpful table. A list of nine recommendations is also presented for those interested in purchasing and using commercial IRIs.

Galen, Nancy. "Informal Reading Inventories for Adults: An Analysis," **Lifelong Learning: The Adult Years**, 3 (March, 1980), 10-14.

Analyzes four IRIs developed specifically for adults. Four tables summarize the results of the analysis in these areas: (1) word lists and passages; (2) comprehension questions; (3) readability; and (4) scoring and evaluation guidelines. None of the IRIs is regarded as clearly superior to the others.

Cramer, Eugene H. "Informal Reading Inventories Go Commercial," **Curriculum Review**, 19 (November, 1980), 424-429.

Presents some background information on IRIs and analyzes seven commercial IRIs. Major areas for the analysis include: (1) word lists, passages, readability; (2) questions and passage dependency; (3) objectives and field testing; and (4) special features and teachers' comments. The format for presenting each IRI is the same so comparisons can be made quite easily.

Anderson, William W. "Commercial Informal Reading Inventories: A Comparative Review," **Reading World**, 17 (December, 1977), 99-104.

Offers some important ways commercial IRIs differ from one another and reviews three IRIs. A brief narrative description of each is given regarding validity, reliability, content validity, and passage dependent questions. Areas of commonalty are listed. The author concludes that none of the three IRIs can be categorically endorsed or dismissed as having little value. Despite similarities in purposes and design, each IRI seems appropriate for different circumstances which the author depicts. Included is a chart outlining the variable characteristics of the three IRIs considered.

SECTION II: RESEARCH

VALIDITY AND RELIABILITY

Klesius, Janell P., and Susan P. Homan. "A Validity and Reliability Update on the Informal Reading Inventory with Suggestions for Improvement," **Journal of Learning Disabilities**, 18 (February, 1985), 71-76.

Provides a review of research on the validity and reliability of IRIs. The areas first examined were content and concurrent validity. The research concerning the validity revealed that one cannot be assured that a passage taken from a basal text is comparable to the remaining material. The other area researched focused on reliability of IRIs. Specifically, the authors focused on interscorer reliability and effect of passage length on student performance. The authors provided ten suggestions for teachers. Also provided are suggestions for evaluating IRIs. The authors suggest a need for careful evaluation of these instruments. Teachers increase the validity and reliability of the IRI once they become aware of the need for careful evaluation.

Fuchs, Lynn, S., Douglas Fuchs, and Stanley L. Deno. "Reliability and Validity of Curriculum-Based Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading Research Quarterly**, 18 (Fall, 1982), 6-26.

Investigates reliability and validity of standard and salient IRI procedures. Employing 91 elementary-age students, this study examined the technical adequacy of (1) choosing a criterion of 95% accuracy for word recognition to determine an instructional level, (2) arbitrarily selecting a passage to represent the difficulty level of a basal reader, and (3) employing one-level floors and ceilings to demarcate levels beyond which behavior is not sampled. Correlational and congruency analyses supported the external validity of the 95% standard but questioned the reliability and validity of passage sampling procedures and one-level floors and ceilings. Sampling over occasions and test forms is discussed as a more valid IRI procedure.

Helgren-Lempesis, Valerie, A., and Charles T. Mangrum II. "An Analysis of Alternate-form Reliability of Three Commercially-prepared Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading Research Quarterly**, 21 (Spring, 1986), 209-215.

Studies 75 fourth-grade students from two elementary schools randomly assigned to one of three commercially-prepared IRIs. Forms A and B of the Analytical, Basic, and Ekwall reading inventories were administered to these three groups. Pearson and generalizability coefficients ranged between .60 and .78. According to estimated variance components from the generalizability analysis, little error could be directly attributed to the forms, as the subjects were the source of the greatest variance. Although the results of the study did not reveal perfect reliability, they were by no means as unreliable as some critics have suggested. Future research is needed to address the question of what an acceptable level of reliability would be for IRIs.

Bowden, Nancy B., and Wilson H. Lane. "A Study of Fourth Grade Students' Reading Comprehension Measures in Short and Long Passages of an Informal Reading Inventory," November, 1979. Microfiche ED 186 855.

Compares the reliability of short versus long passages in IRIs. After 132 fourth-grade students were tested with the Standard Reading Inventory, Form B, they read longer passages in either the oral or silent modes. Students with higher silent reading scores read long passages orally, while students with higher oral reading scores or comparable oral/silent reading scores read long passages in the silent mode. The results suggested that the 70% criterion normally used with short passages inadequately predicted reading levels for the longer selections. The increased difficulty of long passages was evident by the marked decreases in comprehension scores. Students with better comprehension scores in either the short-silent or short-oral modes appeared to be frustrated by the longer-reading materials. The students with comparable oral/silent reading levels in the short passages showed significantly different scores on the long passages, suggesting that the increased difficulty of long passages inhibited their comprehension considerably. Since the long passages appear to be more difficult than short passages at the same levels, it was suggested that the trend toward using more lenient interpretation criteria in informal reading inventories might be based on false assumptions.

Fuchs, Lynn S., Douglas Fuchs, and Linn Maxwell. "The Validity of Informal Reading Comprehension Measures," **Remedial and Special Education**, 9 (March/April, 1988), 20-28.

Assesses the criterion, construct, and concurrent validity of four informal reading comprehension measures: question answering tests, recall measures, oral passage reading tests, and cloze techniques. Mildly and moderately handicapped middle and junior high school boys (N = 70) were administered the informal measures in one sitting, with four passages equally represented across the four measures and with the administration order of measures counterbalanced. Criterion tests, the Reading Comprehension and Word Study Skills subtests of the Stanford Achievement Test, also were administered in a separate sitting. Results indicated that the oral reading rate score demonstrated the strongest criterion validity, with adequate construct and concurrent validity. A second acceptable index was the written recall measure. Implications for designing reading comprehension monitoring procedures are discussed.

Christine, Charles T., Lawrence A. Anderson, Edythe Bleznak, Jane B. Levine, and Phyllis Lewy. "The Between Teacher Reliability of the Ekwall Reading Inventory and the Classroom Reading Inventory," October, 1982. Microfiche ED 232 145.

Uses a test-retest research design to study the reliability of the Classroom Reading Inventory (CRI) and the Ekwall Reading Inventory (ERI). Independent variables of test administrator to subject, test administrator to test, subject to test, and test order were randomized. Subjects include 31 children aged 7 through 12 years. The four teachers who served as examiners were all graduates of master's degree programs in developmental and remedial reading instruction. The test was a "live" administration of one of the reading inventories by one teacher; the testing session was tape recorded. The retest was a second teacher scoring the audio tape recording of the test. The dependent variable was the agreement (or lack of agreement) in identifying a single reading instructional level between test and retest. Results showed that in 14 of 16 trials (85%) there was agreement between teachers using the ERI. In 5 of the 16 trials there was perfect agreement between teachers on an instructional reading level. None of the test-retest trails showed a teacher-teacher instructional level difference of more than one grade level. Trials of the CRI showed teacher agreement on instructional level in 10 of 16 trials (67%). Only one test-retest instance showed a between-teacher instructional level disagreement of more than one grade level. These results provide a strong indication that the CRI and ERI produce reliable estimates of a student's reading instructional level.

PLACEMENT, CRITERIA, AND READING LEVELS

Anderson, Betty, and Rosie Webb Joels. "Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading Improvement**, 23 (Winter, 1986), 299-302.

Reports a study composed of 136 students in grades two through five to establish the oral reading accuracy level and to determine whether repetitions should be counted as oral reading errors. Results indicated that oral accuracy levels of 90% for first-grade passages and 94% for passages two through five were appropriate. Inconsistencies and inconclusive findings on scoring of repetitions led the authors to support the recommendation of others to exclude repetitions until further evidence becomes available.

Homan, Susan P., and Janell P. Klesius. "A Re-examination of the IRI: Word Recognition Criteria," **Reading Horizons**, 26 (Fall, 1985), 54-61.

Investigates which word recognition criterion is most appropriate for determining the instructional reading level for elementary students. One hundred and fifty students in Hillsborough County, Florida were participants in this study. The researchers used a modified version of Powell's (1970) method. Initial results confirmed previous research findings by Killgallon (cited in Beldin, 1970) strongly indicating that the word recognition criterion for the instructional level should be set at about 95% for students reading at grade levels one through six. However, a more in depth analysis of the data revealed that word recognition criteria may be variable depending on a number of factors which are listed in this study. The investigators contend that IRIs need to be standardized so criteria can be set to coincide with each particular passage, thereby attempting to control the many variables affecting student performance.

Newcomer, Phyllis L. "A Comparison of Two Published Reading Inventories," **Remedial and Special Education**, 6 (January-February, 1985), 31-36.

Examines the extent to which two commercial IRIs identify the same instructional level when administered to 50 children in grades one through seven. The results demonstrate a significant lack of congruence between the instruments, particularly in the intermediate grades. In more than 50% of the cases, the IRIs identified

different instructional levels. The application of the Fry Readability Formula to paragraphs from both inventories also shows little agreement in grade level designations. Recommendations that pertain to the possible improvement of IRIs include standardization strategies and reliability data.

Lombardo, Marie. "The Effectiveness of an Informal Reading Inventory in Identifying the Functional Reading Levels of Bilingual Students." Bilingual Education Paper Series, Vol. 2, No. 10, 1979. Microfiche ED 258 448.

Reports a study undertaken to (1) examine the development and construction of a Group Informal Reading Inventory to predict the reading comprehensive levels (independent, instructional, and frustration) of junior high school bilingual students for the purpose of reading instruction and (2) validate the inventory through a three-way correlational study comparing the comprehension results with those of a cloze test, a standardized test, and a questionnaire by which teachers estimate students' reading levels. The study involved 50 bilingual students of predominantly English- and Spanish-speaking, low- and middle-income backgrounds in an urban school. All had been instructed in Spanish until they gained English language proficiency; then they were mainstreamed into the English curriculum. It was discovered that the students were all functioning far below their developmental grade levels and their assigned present grade levels, and native language grades were lower than those in English. It is recommended that (1) a decision be made for each individual student as to whether he/she should be taught in two languages or, if his/her native language skills are insufficient to transfer to English as a second language, whether he/she should be taught in English; (2) testing for reading and content areas be administered regularly to monitor progress; and (3) there be careful regulation of the timing, techniques, content, materials, and evaluation of bilingual instruction.

Nolen, Patricia A., and Tony C. M. Lam. "A Comparison of IRI and Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty Reading Levels in Clinical Assessment," 1981. Microfiche ED 253 843.

Compares the Durrell Analysis of Reading Difficulty and IRI independent and instructional level designations for 15 children, ages 9 to 11 years, who had been referred

to a diagnostic clinic for reading assessment. The children's reading performance was first scored according to procedures outlined in the Durrell Analysis manual. A second scoring was made according to recommendations for administering informal reading inventories given by Johnson and Kress. Results suggested that the procedures yield significantly different overall grade level designations. Further analysis revealed that (1) the average independent level established by the Durrell Analysis procedure was significantly higher than that obtained by the IRI procedure, and (2) the instructional level mean was significantly higher than the independent level mean only when the IRI procedure was used.

Cardarelli, Aldo F. "The Influence of Reinspection on Students' IRI Results," **The Reading Teacher**, 41 (March, 1988), 664-667.

Reports a study with 47 fourth-grade students who silently read passages from the Analytical Reading Inventory. Once the student's frustration level was reached with no passage reinspection, the same level was given on another form with reinspection allowed. Over half of the students made gains sufficient to change from the frustration level to the instructional level. The author notes the different cognitive demands in the recall and reinspection approaches to assessing comprehension and believes reinspection provides the most useful results.

Brecht, Richard D. "Testing Format and Instructional Level with the Informal Reading Inventory," **The Reading Teacher**, 31 (October, 1977), 57-59.

Results from previous research suggest that achievement levels based upon errors made during oral reading from sight will not be representative of actual reading ability. Results differ depending on whether the test passage is read silently or orally first. A study in a rural school in Southern Illinois was conducted using 28 third graders, 26 fourth graders, and 16 fifth graders to examine the effects of oral rereading on estimates of instructional level. Two independently developed, non-published IRIs were administered to each subject. Results indicate that to get the best measure of a child's instructional reading level, the student should be allowed to read the selection silently first.

Smith, Lynn C., Lawrence L. Smith, Gay Gruetzemacher, and Jane Anderson. "Locating the Recreational Level of Elementary Grade Students," November, 1982. Microfiche ED 225 106.

Compares students' recreational reading levels to their independent, instructional, and frustrational levels determined with an IRI. Subjects, 20 second-grade and 20 fifth-grade students, were administered the Basic Reading Inventory. In addition, the school's librarian recorded titles of four books chosen by each student within a 2-month period. These books were freely selected and the children did not know that their choices were being monitored. After the books had been returned to the library, researchers estimated the books' difficulty level with the Fry Readability Graph. Results showed that second-grade students selected books for recreational reading within their independent reading level 42% of the time, within their instructional level 25% of the time, and at their frustration level 33% of the time. Fifth-grade students, on the other hand, selected books for recreational reading within their independent reading level 42% of the time, within their instructional level 32% of the time, and at their frustration level 26% of the time. When they selected books to read for pleasure, both second- and fifth-grade students chose books above their independent level 58% of the time. These results indicate that it is inappropriate for educators to prescribe the level of books read for pleasure based on an IRI.

Shipman, Dorothy A., and Edna W. Warncke. "Informal Assessment in Reading: Group vs. Individual," September, 1984. Microfiche ED 249 482.

Reports a study conducted to determine whether informal group assessment instruments could be used effectively to provide the same type of reading achievement information as that secured from informal individual instruments. The researchers developed group instruments comparable to individual instruments, including a group reading inventory for grades 1 through 12, cloze inventory for the same grades, specific comprehension skills assessments, and specific study skills assessments. The Group Reading Inventory (GRI) and a published IRI were administered to 312 students who were expected to have reading levels ranging from the preprimer level to grade 12. The results of the two inventories were then analyzed to determine the amount of correlation between the functional reading levels of each. There was a statistically significant correlation between the scores on the GRI and on the IRI.

Findings suggest that since both kinds of inventories tend to diagnose comparable functional reading levels, the GRI is a valid alternative to the IRI for assessing reading levels, and at a considerable saving of class time.

Eldredge, J. Lloyd, and Dennie Butterfield. "Sacred Cows Make Good Hamburger: A Report on a Reading Research Project Titled 'Testing the Sacred Cows in Reading'," 1984. Microfiche ED 255 861.

Investigates the following "sacred cows" in reading: (1) the use of IRIs for grouping students in reading instruction, (2) the homogeneous grouping practices currently used in most classrooms in the United States, (3) the use of readability formulas to identify "appropriate" reading materials for students to read, (4) the idea that students can be taught to read effectively only via basal readers, and (5) the analytical phonics strategies used to teach students phonics skills. The five experimental programs involved in the study were assigned to second-grade classrooms in four Utah school districts. Students in both experimental and control classrooms were administered pre- and post-tests in reading, vocabulary, reading comprehension, phonics, self-image, and interest in reading. Reading vocabulary and reading comprehension were tested using the Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test, Level B, Form 1. The findings suggest involving students in a lot of noninstructional reading and using: (1) an analytical/ synthetic decoding approach; (2) phonics to identify words not recognizable on sight; (3) heterogeneous grouping; and (4) children's literature rather than basal readers. Numerous tables of findings and seven appendices contain material relevant to the study.

Forell, Elizabeth R. "The Case for Conservative Reader Placement," **The Reading Teacher**, 38 (May, 1985), 857-862.

Reports a study of all students (91) who entered the third grade of a midwestern school for a five-year period. Students were placed in basal materials that were comfortable (not more than 5% meaning-changing errors and at least 75% comprehension). Using this criteria for placement, half of the students were placed in grade-level materials; the others needed readers one to three years below grade level. Reading achievement

on the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills showed substantial improvement for the low group: from the 23rd percentile in beginning third grade to the 48th percentile in beginning seventh grade. The author argues for placing students in books that are not too hard.

COMPREHENSION QUESTIONS

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A., Jennifer Long, and Anne Kruse. "The Passage Independence of IRI Comprehension Question Categories: Evidence of Non-Uniformity," **Reading Improvement**, 24 (Summer, 1987), 101-106.

Investigates the passage independence of comprehension questions across subskill categories on two IRIs: the Basic Reading Inventory (Form A) and the Informal Reading Inventory (Form B). Sixty elementary school students from a rural midwestern school district, ten each from grades one through six, were administered the questions from the Basic Reading Inventory at their respective grade levels under a passage-absent condition. A second group of sixty elementary school students from a separate midwestern school district was administered the questions from the IRI under the same conditions. Percent correct scores were calculated for each subskill category on the two inventories. A lack of uniformity across subskill categories was revealed for both inventories. These results were interpreted as providing sufficient support for Schell and Hanna's caveat relative to the practice of analyzing a student's strengths and weaknesses in comprehension subskills.

Marr, Mary Beth, and Kathleen R. Lyon. "Passage Independency and Question Characteristics: An Analysis of Three Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading Psychology**, 2 (Spring, 1981), 97-102.

Examines three IRIs to identify passage independent test questions, questions which could be answered correctly without reading the corresponding passages. Fourth-grade students of good and poor reading ability were administered the test questions orally without access to the passage. The percentage of questions answered correctly was calculated for each test. An analysis of variance procedure revealed that the Classroom Reading Inventory was the most passage independent followed by the Analytical Reading Inventory and Ginn 720 inventory, respectively. However, the two reader groups did not differ significantly in

their performance across the three tests. An analysis of students' responses to the questions revealed that three question categories in particular tended to be passage independent in nature. These categories were: (a) general information, (b) vocabulary meaning, and (c) affective. The investigation also examined the literal and inferential characteristics of the test questions. Suggestions were made for evaluating the validity of reading comprehension questions.

Duffelmeyer, Frederick A., and Barbara Blakely Duffelmeyer. "Main Idea Questions on Informal Reading Inventories," **The Reading Teacher**, 41 (November, 1987), 162-166.

Studies one of the subskill categories included in the IRI, the main idea. After analyzing three commercial IRIs, the investigators concluded that the label is frequently a misnomer. Many main idea questions do not measure what they purport to measure. Rather, they relate to topic. The investigators stress the differences between topic and main idea. They fear this may spill over into later reading with students having great difficulties in understanding and assessing main ideas. Therefore, it is imperative that teachers analyze main idea questions on IRIs to determine the skills actually being measured.

Davis, Carol. "The Effectiveness of Informal Assessment Questions Constructed by Secondary Teachers," in P. David Pearson and Jane Hansen (Eds.), **Reading: Disciplined Inquiry in Process and Practice.** Clemson, South Carolina: National Reading Conference, 1978, 13-15.

Examines the effectiveness of informal assessment questions constructed by secondary teachers. The teacher-constructed questions seemed to be at the appropriate level of difficulty, but they often did not discriminate between high and low scoring subjects. The author contends that secondary teachers are frequently encouraged to develop their own informal assessment instruments despite the fact that they may not be adequately prepared for this task. The results of this study seem to suggest a need to reconsider the unqualified encouragement of teacher-constructed secondary inventories.

Peterson, Joe, M. Jean Greenlaw, and Robert J. Tierney. "Assessing Instructional Placement with the I.R.I.: The Effectiveness of Comprehension Questions," **The Journal of Educational Research**, 71 (May, June, 1978), 247-250.

Investigates whether different sets of questions generated for an IRI would yield different instructional placement of students. Using identical passages, trained educators following published criteria wrote questions for an IRI. Three question sets were selected and all were administered to 57 elementary students in grades two through five. The order of administration of the three sets was rotated to counter a learning effect. Correlations between the instructional placements indicated by the question sets did not approach the reliability coefficient necessary for interpretation of individual results. Lack of agreement across the three sets of questions raised the question of dependability of placement of students on the basis of their ability to respond to questions derived from the question-generating guidelines under consideration.

Joels, Rosie Webb, and Betty Anderson. "Informal Reading Inventory Comprehension Questions: Are Classification Schemes Valid?" **Reading Horizons**, 28 (Spring, 1988), 178-183.

Presents a study which examines 136 elementary school students' performance on the JAT (Joels, Anderson, and Thompson) Reading Inventory, noting variable student performance on the different question types. Reports that the discriminant validity of the JAT as a diagnostic instrument appears to be established.

Fowler, Elaine D., and Walter J. Lamberg. "Effect of Pre-Questions on Oral Reading by Elementary Students," **Reading Improvement**, 16 (Spring, 1979), 71-74.

Seeks to determine if questions asked prior to reading or questions asked before and after reading would improve performance on word recognition and comprehension. Subjects were elementary school students ranging from first to fifth grade. One group of students tested in the Fall, 1977 and the other in the Spring, 1978, on IRIs. Results from the IRI on the lowest instructional level and the frustrational level were used as the measure of subjects' performance on the post-question task. For the pre-question task, additional passages at the students' instructional and frustrational levels were selected. No significant differences were found in favor of the pre-question task on word recognition or comprehension.

Kender, Joseph P., and Herbert Rubenstein. "Recall Versus Reinspection in IRI Comprehension Tests," **The Reading Teacher**, 30 (April, 1977), 776-779.

Maintains that recall-type questions may merely test an individual's ability to remember what has been read rather than to understand it. Describes a study of 32 fourth graders, 16 of high reading ability and 16 of low reading ability, which attempted to compare an IRI comprehension check by means of recall questions to a check by means of reinspection. The study was designed to determine: (1) the difference, if any, between recall scores and reinspection scores; and (2) whether memory for sentence content is an intrinsic part of reading comprehension. To test the hypotheses, subjects read two IRI passages at each level of difficulty; comprehension was checked by means of recall for one passage and by reinspection for the other. Findings include that: (1) reinspection scores were significantly higher than recall scores for both groups; and (2) the effect of reinspection was substantially the same for both ability groups. Concludes that readers should be allowed to reinspect IRI passages before answering comprehension questions.

COMPARISONS WITH STANDARDIZED TESTS

Smith, William Earl, and Michael D. Beck. "Determining Instructional Reading Level with 1978 Metropolitan Achievement Tests," **The Reading Teacher**, 34 (December, 1980), 313-319.

Compares the reading comprehension test of the Metropolitan Achievement Tests (MAT), one of three placement tests for a basal series, cloze tests, and two standardized IRIs to determine instructional reading level (IRL). The subjects were 700 elementary school students; eleven first-grade classes and seven classes each for second, third, fourth, and sixth grades. The data indicated a strong relationship among the results of the four procedures used to estimate IRL. The MAT results compared most closely with the other techniques and appear to provide an accurate estimate of a student's IRL.

Bristow, Page Simpson, John J. Pikulski, and Peter L. Pelosi. "A Comparison of Five Estimates of Reading Instructional Level," **The Reading Teacher**, 37 (December, 1983), 273-279.

Reports that reading instructional level scores of a teacher-constructed IRI, the commercially-prepared Basic Reading Inventory, the Metropolitan Achievement Test, and the students' actual level of placement in books are roughly comparable, but that the Wide Range Achievement

Test reading subtest places students much higher. The sample used for this study was 72 students, 24 each from grades two, four, and six. This study indicated that each of the four tests may be useful for different purposes. A table presents the range of agreement among the various measures for instructional level placement.

Blanchard, Jay S., Paul Borthwick, Jr., and Ann Hall. "Determining Instructional Reading Level: Standardized Multiple Choice Versus IRI Probed Recall Questions," **Journal of Reading**, 26 (May, 1983), 684-689.

Compares results of standardized reading tests with IRIs to determine whether teachers should favor one score over another as an indicator of instructional reading level. Subjects were 60 students each from third and fifth grade and 45 students from seventh grade from four suburban/rural racially-mixed schools. This study did not support the assumption that standardized scores run too high or that reading instruction should begin at a lower level.

Oliver, Jo Ellen, and Richard D. Arnold. "Comparing a Standardized Test, an Informal Inventory and Teacher Judgment on Third Grade Reading," **Reading Improvement**, 15 (Spring, 1978), 56-59.

Compares results of a standardized test, teacher judgments, and an IRI, using third-grade subjects. Fifteen boys and fifteen girls were given the Iowa Test of Basic Skills and the Goudy Informal Reading Inventory. Without knowledge of scores, teachers estimated instructional reading levels. Pearson Product Moment Correlation, Analysis of Variance, and Paired t-tests were used. Means of teacher judgment (2.9) and standardized test scores (2.9) were not significantly different. Means of IRI placements (2.4) were significantly different from teacher judgment means and standardized test scores means ($p < .01$). The highest correlations were between teacher judgment and the IRI placements.

Manning, Maryann, Gary Manning, and Caroline B. Cody. "A Comparison Among Measures of Reading Achievement With Low Income Black Third Grade Students," March/April, 1985. Microfiche ED 261 074.

Compares different types of reading achievement measures for 58 low-income, urban black third graders. Two formal tests were administered: the norm-referenced California Achievement Tests (CAT), and the criterion-referenced

Alabama Basic Competency Test (ABCT). Informal measures included the Houghton-Mifflin Informal Reading Inventory (HMIRI), the Classroom Reading Inventory (CRI), a cloze procedure, and teacher judgment (as indicated by the basal reader assignment for each student). Results indicate that correlations among all of the measures were moderate to high. The formal tests, particularly the CAT, tended to produce lower scores than the informal measures. In spite of high correlations, the CAT and ABCT results revealed very different distributions of student ability. With the ABCT, more students showed average and above average performance. Examination of teachers' judgments regarding reading book placement, as compared to test results, indicated that teachers underestimated students' reading ability and placements did not reflect test results. HMIRI results also suggested that a number of students could have been assigned to a higher-level reading book. It was suggested that informal measures be used for book placement and that multiple measures of reading achievement be used in decision making.

Manning, Gary, Maryann Manning, and Roberta Long. "First Grade Reading Assessment: Teacher Opinions, Standardized Reading Tests, and Informal Reading Inventories," November, 1985. Microfiche ED 265 204.

Investigates the relationship between and among the results of three types of reading assessment in the first grade: a standardized reading test (the Stanford Achievement Tests); an IRI (the Classroom Reading Inventory); and teacher judgment of student rank in reading achievement. The study included 165 first-grade students with a mean age of 84.6 months. The Pearson product-moment correlation was used to assess the relationship between the scores of the IRI word recognition and comprehension tests and the reading portions of the standardized achievement tests. The Spearman-Rho correlation coefficient was used to assess the relationship between teacher judgment and the students' performance on the IRI and the standardized reading test. A statistically significant positive correlation was indicated between the IRI and standardized test scores. There were also positive correlations between achievement variables and the word recognition and also the comprehension scores of the Classroom Reading Inventory. Teacher opinion correlated with all subtests of the standardized test and the word recognition portion of the IRI. The achievement of all combined classrooms and most individual classrooms was average or above, based on national norms.

Coleman, Margaret, and William R. Harmer. "A Comparison of Standardized Reading Tests and Informal Placement Procedures," **Journal of Learning Disabilities**, 15 (August/September, 1982), 396-398.

Compares selected subtests of commonly used standardized reading tests and informal placement procedures with 32 primary (grades 1-3) students in a summer reading program. Tests chosen for comparison were the Wide Range Achievement Test (WRAT), Diagnostic Reading Scales (Spache), and the Woodcock Reading Mastery Tests, Form A. The informal placement was the tutor-placed instructional level. Results indicate that the selected reading measures yield significantly different results. The independent level of the Spache was the highest, followed by the WRAT, the Spache instructional level, both subtests of the Woodcock, and tutor placement.

Amoriell, William J. "Use of Standardized Reading Tests as Measures of Reading Achievement," 1981. Microfiche ED 265 508.

Reports a study that provides insight into the consistency of reading achievement scores from four standardized tests. Several sets of data were compared to assess the accuracy of grade equivalents or instructional reading levels obtained on standardized tests. Each test was randomly assigned for administration to 23 third graders in a group setting during one of four consecutive mornings. The four tests were: (1) the Iowa Tests of Basic Skills (Form 4); (2) Stanford Achievement Test (Primary Level III--Form A); (3) Gates-MacGinitie Reading Test (Level C--Form 2); and (4) Metropolian Achievement Test (Elementary--Form F--Metro). The resulting grade levels revealed significant discrepancies across the different tests. Seventy percent of the children received grade scores ranging over more than one year. A comparison of the instructional reading levels obtained from the Metro with those obtained from a subsequently administered IRI indicated that more than 50% of instructional reading levels from the Metro varied as much as two to five reader levels from those of the IRI. The results did not support the use of standardized test scores as adequate measures of reading achievement or as a substitute for individually administered IRIs.

USE, READABILITY, AND OTHER FACTORS

Harris, Larry A., and Rosary H. Lalik. "Teacher's Use of Informal Reading Inventories: An Example of School Constraints," **The Reading Teacher**, 40 (March, 1987), 624-630.

Investigates circumstances affecting the success of both IRIs and diagnostic teaching. Two conclusions were reached. First, many reading authorities view the classroom teacher's use of IRIs as a good practice. Second, in order to promote effective use of IRIs, teachers need to be better trained in the use and application of IRIs. A survey conducted with 500 Virginia elementary teachers yielded a 50% return rate. Results of the survey revealed that classroom constraints and administrative procedures for student placement affect diagnostic teaching. Also, as expected, teacher training and knowledge of IRIs affect diagnostic teaching. The survey results and teacher comments are included. The authors concluded that education is necessary for teachers to effectively use IRIs. The investigators recommend that university faculty need to collaborate with teachers and administrators in the use and application of IRIs so that they can be used most effectively.

Masztal, Nancy B., and Lawrence L. Smith. "Do Teachers Really Administer IRIs?" **Reading World**, 24 (October, 1984), 80-83.

Reports a study on the use of IRIs. A questionnaire was developed and sent to teachers in Florida, Illinois, Mississippi, and Tennessee to determine if teachers administer IRIs in their classrooms. A total of 125 teachers from five elementary schools responded. Results indicated that 54% of the teachers actually administered IRIs in the classrooms. The authors recommended that teacher-education courses continue to include the value of an IRI with emphasis on the interpretation and use of information gleaned from the administration of the IRI.

Searls, Evelyn F. "What's the Value of an IRI? Is it Being Used?" **Reading Horizons**, 28 (Winter, 1988), 92-101.

Reports a summary of 343 professionals which indicated that 62% identified IRIs as the most frequent data source for placement compared to basal placement tests, former basal book placements, and achievement tests. When responses were analyzed by classroom teachers and reading specialists, 61% of the teachers indicated low use (never or less than once a semester) of IRIs. Among specialists, over 50% indicated moderate or high use of IRIs. Four tables contain the results of the study.

Brittain, Mary M., Shirley B. Merlin, Patricia Terrell, and Sue F. Rogers. "Informal Reading Assessment: Perceptions of In-service and Pre-service Teachers," **Journal of the Virginia College Reading Educators**, 5 (Fall, 1984), 4-12.

Compares the results of a similar study (Merlin, 1983) with in-service teachers to a study involving 157 pre-service students enrolled in undergraduate reading courses. Among the results, presented in three tables, are: (1) both experienced and prospective teachers expressed a preference for individual inventories; (2) about half of each group used or expected to use published IRIs often or very often; and (3) comprehension problems were identified as the most common diagnostic use of IRIs.

Bradley, John M., and Wilbur S. Ames. "The Influence of Intrabook Readability Variation on Oral Reading Performance," **The Journal of Educational Research**, 70 (November/December, 1976), 101-105.

Describes a study which explored the effect of intrabook readability variation on the oral reading performance of 51 intermediate-grade students. The results suggest that the instructional level yielded by a typical IRI predicts a student's level of functioning for only a portion of a basal reader. Because of intrabook readability variation, it is difficult, if not impossible, to determine which portion of a book relates to IRI results.

Gerke, Ray. "Critique of Informal Reading Inventories: Can a Valid Instructional Level be Obtained?" **Journal of Reading Behavior**, 12 (Summer, 1980), 155-158.

Determines readability estimates of IRIs and one standardized test containing graded reading passages. Most of the IRIs examined included extractions from publisher's basal readers. Readability estimates revealed that the levels reported for some IRI passages may be erroneous, although they generally progress in difficulty.

Gillis, M.K., and Mary W. Olson. "Informal Reading Inventories and Text Type/Structure," January/February, 1986. Microfiche ED 276 971.

Studies seven IRIs, three at the elementary level and four at the secondary level, to (1) discover what text types (narrative or expository) they used at each level to measure student comprehension skills and determine instructional levels and (2) identify the rhetorical structures used in expository passages. The 18 teachers who rated the elementary passages and the 20 who rated the secondary ones had all previously administered IRIs and had studied the literature on text type and structure

and reading comprehension. Each teacher examined at least four IRIs, classified each passage used in them as narrative or expository, judged each narrative passage as well- or poorly-formed, and judged each expository passage according to rhetorical structures adapted from B.J.F. Meyer (1975). The teachers found that all of the preprimer and primer passages used on the IRIs were narrative, while most of the other elementary passages and most of the secondary passages were expository. In addition, they found that many of the narrative passages on the IRIs were not well-formed, and that approximately one-eighth of the elementary and one-fourth of the secondary expository passages had no clear rhetorical structure. The findings suggest that the passages used in IRIs might produce erratic comprehension scores. In light of these findings, five practical suggestions are offered for teachers and diagnosticians who use the currently available commercial IRIs.

Leibert, Robert E. "Performance Profiles of ABE Students and Children on an Informal Reading Inventory," **Reading Psychology**, 4 (April-June, 1983), 141-150.

Compares reading performance abilities for school-age children and adults attending ABE classes. Scores obtained for both groups on the Adult Informal Reading Test were formed into distribution profiles for each tested variable. Differences between the two populations for oral reading accuracy, comprehension, and rate of reading were identified for the two populations. The profile notion was concluded to be a useful means for displaying the performance trends of published IRIs.

Gonzales, Phillip C. and David Elijah. "Stability of Error Patterns on the Informal Reading Inventory," **Reading Improvement**, 15 (Winter, 1978), 279-288.

Investigates twenty-six, third-grade developmental readers as they read and reread extended oral passages at instructional and frustration performance levels. Errors on the four readings were analyzed using the B-S-R Error Analysis system which classifies errors into 23 categories. The data were analyzed to determine type of error change resulting from rereading, consistency of pattern of repeated error, and utilization of context clues in reading. The profile of reading behavior on the two instructional and two frustration level readings revealed a consistent

pattern of error production and context utilization although words on which errors were made varied. The results suggest the employment of consistent word recognition strategies by third grade developmental readers.

Lipson, Marjorie Youmans, Carla H. Cox, Suzette Iwankowski, and Marianne Simon. "Exploration of the Interactive Nature of Reading: Using Commercial IRIs to Gain Insights," **Reading Psychology**, 5 (1984), 209-218.

Uses case-study data from three young readers to investigate variability across IRIs. Results are discussed in terms of the varying demands of text and task as well as the idiosyncratic contributions of each individual to the reading act. The case studies reflect that reading ability is not static, but rather encompasses a range of abilities and behaviors. Use of any one commercial IRI for placement purposes is seriously questioned; however, they can be used to gain insights into reading behavior.

Marzano, Robert J., Jean Larson, Geri Tish, and Sue Vodehnal. "The Graded Word List is Not a Shortcut to an IRI," **The Reading Teacher**, 31 (March, 1978), 647-651.

Contends that the Graded Word List: Quick Gauge of Reading Ability (GWL), developed by La Pray and Ross, is not a valid substitute for an IRI. The authors attempt to illustrate numerically the invalidity of using shortcut techniques like the GWL to determine independent, instructional, and frustration reading levels. The authors suggest that the increased administration time for administering an IRI is justified.

Walker, Susan M., Ronald G. Noland, and Charles M. Greenshields. "The Effect of High and Low Interest Content on Instructional Levels in Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading Improvement**, 16 (Winter, 1979), 297-300.

Studies whether there was a significant difference in the word recognition and comprehension instructional levels of male and female students in the below average, average, and above average reading ability groups within the fifth and sixth year when presented with low and high interest content contained in IRIs. The fifth grade analysis of variance which examined the main effect and the interactions between the four factors of sex, ability group, interest, and type of skill, found a significant differ-

ence in ability groups and type of skill at the .001 level of significance. The analysis of variance for the four factors in sixth grade yielded significant differences in instructional levels of ability groups at the .001 level, in content interest at the .05 level, and in types of skill at the .01 level. The interaction of sex and skill was significant at the .05 level. Other conclusions: high interest content had greater effect on increasing comprehension than on word recognition at both grade levels; high interest content increased instructional levels of males more than of females at both levels; high interest content, while having a negligible effect on above average readers, had a greater effect on average and below average readers.

SECTION III: DESCRIPTIVE REPORTS

GENERAL USES

Blanchard, Jay, and Jerry Johns. "Informal Reading Inventories--A Broader View," **Reading Psychology**, 7 (1986), iii-vii.

Argues that IRIs can do much to strengthen classroom assessment and instruction if teachers are willing to adopt a broader, flexible view. In the past, some teachers have tied IRIs to rigid procedures and the measurement of a few traits. This narrow perspective diminishes the potential of IRIs to meet classroom assessment and instruction needs. A wider perspective suggests that IRIs can be considered assessment strategies that provide teachers with almost complete freedom to explore reading behaviors. Uses include: (1) assessing new students; (2) supporting intuitions; (3) practicing reading; and (4) evaluating special programs.

Bader, Lois A., and Katherine D. Wiesendanger. "Realizing the Potential of Informal Reading Inventories," **Journal of Reading**, 32 (February, 1989), 402-408.

Argues that more emphasis needs to be given to using IRIs for in-depth evaluation of reading behavior to gain insights into the reading process. The authors stress the importance of teacher judgment and believe traditional reliability data may not be one of the most appropriate ways to judge IRIs. The word "estimate" is critical when determining reading levels and making judgments.

Johns, Jerry L. "Reading is Easy When Students are Placed Properly in Books: Using Informal Reading Inventories," **The Reading Instruction Journal**, 30 (Spring, 1987), 11-16.

Addresses the importance of proper placement of students in books to ensure effective reading instruction. The use of IRIs are one tool in the process to achieving the desired result. However, studies conducted by Mastzal and Smith (1984) and Harris and Lalik (1983) conclude that although most teachers have sufficient knowledge to use IRIs, only 54 percent do so. One possible explanation is that the administering of IRIs requires teachers to spend individual time with each of their students. The author stresses that this time spent is invaluable to both teacher and student; therefore, teachers should

make the commitment to use IRIs. Further, although IRIs have been criticized in some respects, they remain a useful tool for assessing reading. IRIs should be viewed as a means toward an end: helping teachers place students in appropriate reading materials to help promote success in reading.

Leibert, Robert E. "The IRI: Relating Test Performance to Instruction--A Concept," **Reading Horizons**, 22 (Winter, 1981), 110-115.

Describes a procedure that allows teachers to identify and order the instructional needs of children through the use of an IRI. Test data are analyzed to show that levels are determined by observing the balance between accuracy and comprehension. Test analysis proceeds from identifying instructional needs to the implementation of trial lessons to verify procedures and strategies which assist the reader in overcoming the problems observed.

Carnine, Linda. "Teaching Basic Reading Skills in Secondary Schools," 1980. Microfiche ED 265 630.

Presents diagnostic and prescriptive techniques that will enable teachers to enhance secondary school students' learning through reading in content areas. Section II reviews diagnostic procedures that allow teachers to match appropriate materials with students' entry vocabulary and comprehension. The Cloze procedure and the use of IRIs are covered.

Johns, Jerry L. "Fifteen Important Sources for Users of Informal Reading Inventories," **Reading World**, 16 (March, 1977), 172-177.

Presents a brief annotated bibliography dealing with IRIs. The fifteen annotations contained in the bibliography were selected from over one hundred pertinent articles and represent a good overview of articles on the development, use, current dilemmas, and future directions of IRIs.

ISSUES AND CRITERIA

Cadenhead, Kenneth. "Reading Level: A Metaphor That Shapes Practice," **Phi Delta Kappan**, 68 (February, 1987), 436-441.

Questions the appropriateness of using reading levels. The lack of validity of grade-level scores and the bases on which various measurements were built are examples of

two areas in which criticism is directed at the claims of precise measurement. Suggestions are offered for change in the way one approaches the use of the concept of reading level. For example, using children's literature in conjunction with the basal program should encourage children to read materials at various levels of difficulty.

Schell, Leo, M., and Gerald S. Hanna. "Can Informal Reading Inventories Reveal Strengths and Weaknesses in Comprehension Subskills?" **The Reading Teacher**, 35 (December, 1981), 263-268.

Argues that commercial IRIs fail to provide accurate, reliable, comparable scores on subskills of reading and can not properly be used to assess students' specific strengths and weaknesses in comprehension. IRIs fail to: (1) demonstrate objective classifications of questions; (2) provide and demonstrate comparable scores across subskill categories; (3) provide evidence of uniform passage dependence and passage independence of questions across categories of comprehension; and (4) provide reliable subskill scales and evidence thereof.

Powell, William R. "The Emergent Reading Level: A New Concept," November, 1982. Microfiche ED 233 334.

Argues that traditional reading placement tests, determining the level at which students can read without teacher mediation, frequently lead to student underplacement. Diagnostic teaching practices, however, can be used to determine students' emergent reading level, the reading level that can be achieved through instruction. After preteaching part of a lesson--providing motivation, background, vocabulary assistance, and purposes--the teacher has students read first silently and then orally. During the oral reading, the teacher records the number and kinds of reading miscues made and notes student affect. By leading students through progressively more difficult lessons, the teacher can determine (1) at what levels the students can read comfortably without help, (2) when reading becomes so difficult that the experience is more harmful than helpful, and (3) what range of materials the students can handle effectively in a teacher-guided situation. Diagnostic testing, reflecting the original intent of diagnostic teaching, gives students the assistance and motivation needed to master increasingly complex conceptual structures.

Lunn, Mary K., and Jerry L. Johns. "Informal Reading Inventories: Reappraising the Criteria for the Instructional Reading Level," **Reading Psychology**, 4 (January-March, 1983), 57-64.

Summarizes a study (Killgallon, 1942) that helped to establish the word-recognition criteria for the instructional reading level and examines Powell's (1970) critique of this study and subsequent research. Three concerns are raised about Powell's 1970 study: comprehension criteria, behavioral characteristics, and miscues counted.

Powell, William R. "Monitoring Reading Behavior: Criteria for Performance," May, 1976. Microfiche ED 120 675.

Contends that the effective use of IRIs depends upon the criteria used in determining the functional reading levels and more specifically the word recognition criteria employed in describing acceptable limits of oral reading behavior. The author of this paper looks at the diverse sets of criteria commonly used, the problems associated with these standard approaches, and the two different sets of criteria for word recognition error ratios for each condition under which the data were obtained. A rationale for each of these sets of criteria is presented for each assessment condition as they are developed within a partial theoretical framework. Emphasis is placed on clarifying the criteria problems connected with the IRI and the teaching and clinical practice which are affected by the evidence offered.

Powell, William R. "Measuring Reading Performance Informally," May, 1978. Microfiche ED 155 589.

Proposes a differential set of IRI criteria for both word recognition and comprehension scores for different levels and reading conditions. In initial evaluation, word recognition scores should reflect only errors of insertions, omissions, mispronunciations, substitutions, unknown words, and transpositions; symptomatic behavior should not be considered. After the student has read, comprehension questions should be asked on a literal level, on implicit understanding, on vocabulary, and on evaluative skills; all should be wholly context dependent. Baseline criteria for determining unsatisfactory reading should be established in comprehension, word recognition, and symptomatic behavior; comprehension is the most significant factor in determining placement. The initial task

of the IRI is to place the student at his/her reading level. This decision is first made on the basis of quantitative data. Then an error analysis gives qualitative information. Placement precedes analysis, but both are necessary for effective reading diagnosis and placement.

Vaughan, Joseph L., Jr., and Paula J. Gaus. "Secondary Reading Inventory: A Modest Proposal," **Journal of Reading**, 21 (May, 1978), 716-720.

Proposes a viable alternative to the traditional IRI format designed specifically to yield information about adolescent readers. A general framework for a secondary reading inventory (SRI) is provided which incorporates an assessment of seven aspects of the adolescent reader's behavior. Areas of assessment include comprehension of varying types of material, knowledge of vocabulary and content area concepts, and critical analysis skills. The significance of interest level as a factor in the adolescent's reading performance is emphasized and reflected in the construction of the SRI. The authors provide the reading specialist with specific suggestions to aid in the construction and administration of an SRI.

Ackerson, Gary E., John M. Bradley, and John Luiten. "A Procedure to Estimate the Probability of Error When Using Reading Placement Tests," **Reading World**, 18 (December, 1978), 186-193.

Delineates a procedure which may be employed to predict the amount and type of placement error present in a criterion-referenced reading placement test of a multiple choice format. The two factors that were found to relate to placement errors of this type of test were test length and the performance level of mastery. The authors conclude that test construction and selection must be improved in order to facilitate the reduction of total test error probability.

Warren, Thomas S. "Informal Reading Inventories--A New Format," November, 1985. Microfiche ED 269 740.

Identifies two significant weaknesses in IRIs developed by the teacher: (1) passages selected randomly from the graded basal readers that may or may not be on the level suggested by a publisher, and (2) the types of questions written for them, usually at the memory level of cognition. Published inventories also have their weaknesses, such as the discrepancy between the grade

levels assigned to the reading selections by the publishers and actual readability levels. Another questionable feature of published inventories is the procedure used for their administration, with students directed to read one selection silently and a different one orally. Because the task of developing a good informal inventory is so complicated, teachers, if they must construct their own, should select several random passages, identify four selections for each grade level from one through ten, and use a modified version of the Fry Readability Graph--extended to determine the difficulty levels of the paragraphs chosen. Introducing teachers to a new format for published inventories is also helpful. Among its new features would be (1) a complete step-by-step procedure for administration, (2) four forms at each grade level, and (3) a readability level for each of the four selections for every grade that is close to the beginning of the grade level for which it is written.

Anderson, William W. "Informal Reading Inventories: Commercial or Conventional?" **Reading World**, 17 (October, 1977), 64-68.

Discuss two types of IRIs. Commercial IRIs are those which are professionally prepared and packaged. Conventional IRIs are those locally prepared and based on potential reading materials. The four purposes of IRIs seem to be achieved in both types of inventories. Contrary to popular notion, the author contends that a wisely-selected commercial IRI is preferable. Anderson notes that conventional IRIs are not practical in their construction and are not advantageous when more than one basal is used. The conventional weaknesses of IRIs lie in a lack of precision at primary levels, reliability, validity. These weaknesses, the author indicates, are also existent in conventional IRIs. The commercial IRI is advantageous in that it is well-organized, neatly packaged, and easy to use. Comprehension questions have been conveniently organized to aid diagnosis. Some field testing has been done. Previous exposure to the passages is less likely. Other practical advantages are listed. Although the author suggests that commercial IRIs are more appropriate than the conventional type, he would not vitiate the value of IRI construction for teacher-education students. Analyzing commercial IRIs and developing expertise in administration is recommended.

Schell, Leo M. "The Validity of the Potential Level Via Listening Comprehension: A Cautionary Note," **Reading Psychology**, 3 (July-September, 1982), 271-276.

Examines historical background and relevant research to determine whether the commonly recommended procedure of determining the reading potential level via listening comprehension is valid in the primary grades. No support was found for the unstated assumptions necessary for this procedure's validity. Three major studies conclusively revealed that use of this procedure to identify children for remedial instruction would drastically over-refer and would include vast numbers of primary grade children progressing normally in learning to read. Based on this evidence, it was concluded that listening comprehension definitely **not** be used to determine the reading potential level in grades one through three.

Cavett, Dorcas C. "Use Ratio for Computing Informal Reading Tests," March, 1982. Microfiche ED 216 340.

Notes that ratios can be used to great advantage in scoring informal reading tests, such as the cloze procedure and the IRI. The paper explains the procedures for calculating cross-ratio and percentages when computing scores for informal reading assessment. Examples are provided for using ratios to determine scores for Powell's Scale for Word Recognition and Comprehension, Betts' Scale for Word Recognition and Comprehension, and cloze testing.

MISCUE ANALYSIS

Leu, Donald J., Jr. "Oral Reading Error Analyses: A Critical Review of Research and Application," **Reading Research Quarterly**, 17 (Spring, 1982), 420-437.

Argues that oral reading error analysis contains the potential for generating important clues to understanding the reading process. In a historical overview of this investigative approach, three problems that plagued early oral reading error studies are evident: (1) the lack of a clearly articulated theoretical framework, (2) an inadequate sensitivity to important methodological issues, and (3) a failure to adequately test the major assumptions involved in this approach. The overview suggests that current oral reading error studies have overcome the first problem but not the second and third. Furthermore, methodological problems contribute significantly to the inconsistent results typically found among oral reading error studies. Finally, there are several critical assumptions that have been ignored by reading error

researchers. Until the methodological problems are overcome and until the assumptions are validated, the results from oral reading error analysis cannot be used confidently in order to make strong claims about either the nature of the reading process or the most appropriate instructional procedures for students.

Pflaum, Susanna W. "Diagnosis of Oral Reading," **The Reading Teacher**, 33 (December, 1979), 278-284.

Proposes a new IRI scoring system for achieving reliability. The first step involves the recording and scoring of errors; the second involves coding the errors. Details of the system that achieve 83 to 100% coder reliability are given in the article.

Hoffman, James V. "Weighting Miscues in Informal Inventories: A Precautionary Note," **Reading Horizons**, 20 (Winter, 1980), 135-139.

Cautions that weighting errors on an oral reading test with miscue analysis procedures can lead to inappropriate independent reading-level placement. Contends that qualitative techniques of assessment such as miscue analysis are a far richer source of information for the discerning teacher than simple error counts, thus revealing ways in which instruction might be adapted to meet specific student needs.

Smith, Laura, and Constance Weaver. "A Psycholinguistic Look at the Informal Reading Inventory Part I: Looking at the Quality of Readers' Miscues: A Rationale and an Easy Method," **Reading Horizons**, 19 (Fall, 1978), 12-22.

Encourages IRI users to conduct a qualitative rather than a quantitative analysis of readers' miscues. Reading for meaning is emphasized as is the effectiveness of teaching word analysis skills through the use of context. The article includes a simplified version of Goodman and Burke's procedure for analyzing a reader's miscues. Guidelines for obtaining and analyzing a reading sample are offered.

Weaver, Constance, and Laura Smith. "A Psycholinguistic Look at the Informal Reading Inventory Part II: Inappropriate Inferences from an Informal Reading Inventory," **Reading Horizons**, 19 (Winter, 1979), 103-111.

Advises teachers to regard tests that measure a reader's recognition of words in isolation with caution since such

tests commonly underestimate the reader's ability to process contextual material. The authors suggest that the use of a simplified version of Goodman and Burke's miscue analysis may be preferable to the use of most available IRIs. An advantage of the miscue analysis procedure lies in its applicability to instructional planning. The importance of evaluating the reader's strengths as well as weaknesses is emphasized.

Scales, Alice M. "The Informal Reading Assessment Inventory," 1980. Microfiche ED 273 922.

Proposes a strategy for merging the IRI and RMI. IRIs test comprehension through questions only, while the Reading Miscue Inventory (RMI) is too cumbersome for the average classroom instructor to administer. Since both measures offer instructors ways of collecting data, they may effectively be merged into an Informal Reading Assessment Inventory (IRAI), bringing together processes from both inventories. The oral reading component of the IRAI may be used to check learners' reading behaviors, such as recall of material via retelling, language usage, and recoding. The silent reading component allows learners the private opportunity to interact with written material during an uninterrupted period of time and to present understanding of the material through predetermined criteria in a predetermined manner. The following guidelines are suggested for preparing and administering the IRAI: (1) select several types of materials for oral reading, long enough to elicit at least 25 oral miscues; (2) compute the readability of the selections using at least two formulas; (3) devise criteria for evaluation; (4) prepare a script for miscue coding; (5) have a cassette tape player available; (6) establish rapport with the learner; (7) have the learner read an entire selection aloud, while the examiner codes miscues; (8) have the learner respond to comprehension criteria; and (9) administer the silent reading comprehension measure using selections of 450 to 500 words.

Wangberg, Elaine G. "Using Machine Theory to Analyze Oral Reading Inventory Results," **The Michigan Reading Journal**, 12 (Fall, 1978), 73-75.

Adapts miscue theory as outlined by Goodman and Burke to the simpler format of the oral reading inventory. Guidelines for using miscue analysis and a retelling method with an oral reading inventory are offered.

SPECIAL POPULATIONS

LaSasso, Carol, and Nancy Swaiko. "Considerations in Selecting and Using Commercially Prepared Informal Reading Inventories with Deaf Students," **American Annals of the Deaf**, 128 (August, 1983), 449-452.

Offers guidelines for the selection and use of commercially prepared IRIs with deaf students. Modifications for deaf students pertain to: selection of the passage to begin testing, the criteria for oral and silent reading levels, and procedures for estimating students' reading potential levels.

Helfeldt, John P., and William A. Henk. "Administering A Group Reading Inventory: An Initiative In Improving Reading Instruction," **Journal of Correctional Education**, 34 (September, 1983), 76-79.

Presents background information for using group IRIs in correctional facilities and offers guidelines for construction, administration, and interpretation. A sample passage, questions, and scheme for administering the IRI in three testing sessions are included.

Lane, Martha A. "Handbook for Volunteer Reading Aides," 1984. Microfiche ED 256 900.

Presents a guide designed to assist volunteer tutors participating in an adult literacy program. Appendixes to the handbook contain an informal reading inventory, a reading placement test, job descriptions for a reading center coordinator and a volunteer reading aide, sample instructional materials, a list of study techniques, and a selected bibliography.

Armstrong, Audrey A., and Sally P. Hunt. "VITAL Guidelines: Tutor Training for an Adult Literacy Program," 1982. Microfiche ED 244 104.

Offers a guide designed as a training tool for volunteers participating in the Volunteers in Tutoring Adult Learners (VITAL) program. VITAL is an adult literacy program that is based on active cooperation between program trainers and volunteer tutors. Various instructional resources are provided in the guide. Appended to the guide are an informal reading inventory, a general educational development (GED) fact sheet, a confidential report and learner profile report form, a workshop agenda, and a VITAL tutor job designation.